

N.M. VETERANS NEWSLETTER

U.S. SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FOR NEW MEXICO'S VETERANS

WINTER 2018



DEAR FRIEND,

The tradition of answering the call of duty runs deep in New Mexico's history. From the Navajo Code Talkers and Bataan Death Marchers to the Korean and Vietnam War GI's to the men and women serving today at Cannon, Holloman, Kirtland, Fort Bliss, White Sands Missile Range, and across the world. Few sacrifices are as selfless as those made by our military service men and women. Their unwavering devotion and extraordinary courage reflect the core principles we share as Americans.

Our ability to maintain the strongest and most dedicated military force in the world depends on our nation's ability to keep its promises to provide our veterans the best care, benefits, and opportunities they earned. I am committed to keeping America's promise to our heroic veterans and their families so that they receive the benefits they have earned.

We must be unwavering in our commitment to our men and women in uniform who deserve more than just words of gratitude for their sacrifice when they return home. Thank you for your immeasurable service to our nation. Please continue to keep me informed of the issues important to you and the ways we in Congress can do more for New Mexico's veterans.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Heinrich'.

MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator

MY OFFICE CAN HELP WITH:

- VA Claims
- Military Records
- Replacement Medals
- GI Bill Benefits
- VA Home Loans
- VA Health Benefits
- Survivor's Benefits

TO START A CASE WITH MY OFFICE:

Call My Office At
(505) 346-6601 or fill
out the Privacy Release
Form on my Website:
Heinrich.Senate.Gov

HOW CAN I HELP YOU?



PHOTO: Flag Presentation to the Silver City Veterans, July 4, 2017

One of my most important responsibilities as your Senator is to keep America's promise to our service members and their families so that when our troops return home, they receive the care and benefits that they have earned. My office has helped hundreds of veterans across New Mexico access their care and benefits. Whether you or a family member are experiencing trouble filing a claim, receiving benefits, accessing health benefits or military records, replacing medals, or other veteran issues, my office is here to help. Please contact my office if we can be helpful in any way.

- U.S. SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH



WORKING TO END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

PHOTO: Mesilla Valley Community of Hope In Las Cruces, August 24, 2016

\$10.7 MILLION IN GRANTS TO HELP NM END HOMELESSNESS

In January, I announced \$10.7 million in U.S. Housing and Urban Development grants to help New Mexico families, veterans and individuals experiencing homelessness. Stable housing is the foundation for economic security. These important grants will fund efforts to end homelessness in communities across New Mexico and give individuals the opportunity to get back on their feet. I'm proud to support local organizations across New Mexico that are at the forefront of efforts to connect youth, families, and veterans experiencing homelessness with emergency shelter, lifesaving services, and pathways toward permanent housing. I will continue fighting for the resources our state needs to combat homelessness and strengthen our communities.

THANKING VETERANS



ON VETERANS DAY,

I joined communities across New Mexico and our nation in offering sincere gratitude for our veterans for their service to our country. Few sacrifices are as selfless as those made by our military service men and women. Their unwavering devotion and extraordinary courage reflect the core principles we share as Americans.



PHOTOS: Veterans Day In Las Cruces, November 11, 2017

SUPPORTING VETERANS

HELPING VETERANS ACCESS CARE THEY NEED

ALAMOGORDO VETERANS MAY ACCESS SPECIALIZED CARE AT EL PASO VA

After hearing from veterans in Alamogordo who were delaying or going without specialized care because the drive to Albuquerque was too difficult, I worked with Senator Tom Udall and Representative Steve Pearce to urge VA Secretary David Shulkin to provide these veterans with options. Secretary Shulkin responded by giving Alamogordo veterans the choice to seek specialized medical care either at the El Paso VA Medical Center or the Albuquerque VA Medical Center. This good news will ensure veterans in southern New Mexico have the flexibility and choice they need to access health care closer to home instead of having to drive all the way to the VA in Albuquerque. I will continue fighting to increase timely access to health care services for our veterans in each and every New Mexico community.

TREATING BRAIN INJURIES

UNM & VA GET \$3.1 MILLION TO STUDY TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

I was pleased to hear the University of New Mexico announce in November that the UNM Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences was awarded a \$3.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense. These grant dollars will fund joint research between UNM and the New Mexico VA Health Care system to study an electronic brain stimulation technique to treat veterans and service members who experience symptoms associated with mild Traumatic Brain Injuries. As many as 20 percent of US service members who have returned from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from mild traumatic brain injuries today. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I am committed to authorizing innovative research studies that lead to quality of life improvements for our veterans who experience complex medical conditions as a result of their line of duty service.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

ENSURING VETERANS RECEIVE WHAT THEY HAVE EARNED:

My office has managed over 1,800 veteran cases. This intervention has resulted in a local, indirect, economic impact of more than \$1.68 million for New Mexico.



RESOLVING BEN'S ISSUE AT THE VA

I recently had the privilege of meeting Bernabe (Ben) Dominguez in Albuquerque, a 91-year-old veteran of WWII and a Gold Star Father. Ben contacted my office for assistance after the VA erroneously assigned him a fiduciary to manage his finances. During a compensation and pension examination, VA personnel mistakenly assumed that one of Ben's friends was serving as his daily caretaker. Operating under the assumption that Ben needed a daily caretaker; the VA determined that Ben must be incompetent and unable to manage his finances on his own. After the VA assigned Ben a fiduciary, he filed a request for reconsideration with the VA and my office intervened to ensure that the agency provided him with another competency examination. The VA followed through with the reexamination and overturned their previous decision when they confirmed he really did not have a daily caretaker. It was an honor to be of service to Ben in helping him maintain his dignity and reestablish his financial independence. I am thankful for Ben's service and the service of all veterans in New Mexico.

MAKING SURE VETERANS DON'T GO HUNGRY



PHOTOS: Taos Feeds Taos, December 5, 2015

Across the nation, nearly 1.5 million veterans live in households that utilize the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program SNAP. Recent estimates suggest that 12,000 New Mexico veterans, 8 percent of the state's veteran population, received SNAP benefits between 2014 and 2016. President Trump recently proposed new eligibility requirements for SNAP that would prohibit New Mexicans in need from accessing food assistance. In response to Trump's proposals, I recently joined Senator Tom Udall and Representatives Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Lujan Grisham in a joint letter, urging President Trump not to make changes to SNAP. SNAP makes a crucial difference for veterans struggling to overcome obstacles to feed their families and the program is our nation's first line of defense against hunger.



EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

PHOTOS: Veterans Day in Las Vegas, NM, November 11, 2016

NATIONAL VETERANS GOLDEN AGE GAMES 2018

The New Mexico VA Health Care System is sponsoring the 32nd National Veterans Golden Age Games in Albuquerque, bringing the event to New Mexico for the first time. The NVGAG offers competitive recreational and sporting events for veterans of all ability levels, aged 55 years or older and is the largest competition for this age group of military veterans in the world. Some 800 veteran athletes from across the country are expected to compete in 2018, allowing us to highlight our great state, our wealth of cultural diversity, and our love for veterans.

Veterans will compete in 21 different sports across eight age groups in Ambulatory, Wheelchair and Visually Impaired divisions. Online registration will be open from April 2 to May 2, 2018 and the event will run from August 4-8, 2018. The VA is seeking to fill some 2,500 volunteer positions to assist with the games. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Jerry Burgoa at (505) 248-3214, Jerhald.Burgoa@VA.Gov, or Catherine Ivie at (505) 265-1711 ext. 2030.



A photograph of U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich, a man in a dark suit and tie, leaning forward to shake hands with an elderly man. The elderly man is wearing a purple jacket, a dark baseball cap with a "BROTHERS" logo, and glasses. They are in a room with other people in the background, including a man in a military uniform. The image has a dark overlay.

U.S. SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

HEINRICH.SENATE.GOV

505-346-6601

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